CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.878
21 June 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 21 June 2001, at 10.20 a.m.

President Mr.Camilo Reyes Rodriguez (Colombia)

GE.01-62604 (E) 290601 030701

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 878th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have the representative of Belgium on my list of speakers for today. I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Mr. Damien Angelet.

Mr. ANGELET (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I have the honour to take the floor in this forum, I would like first to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and for the excellent work which you have been doing.

I would like to inform you that, in their capacity as co-chairs of the Standing Committee of Experts on the General Status and Operation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, Zimbabwe and Belgium will be organizing, in conjunction with Nicaragua, an information meeting on the Third Meeting of the States parties, to be held in Managua from 18 to 21 September 2001.

The information meeting will be held on 27 June at 3 p.m. in room VII in the Palais des Nations. All delegations are invited to attend.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that, to date, 117 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention and 140 States have signed, ratified or acceded to it. Belgium encourages all States which are not yet parties to the Convention to ratify it or to accede to it as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

As this does not appear to be the case, I would like to inform you that I have received an official communication from the Minister of Defence of Estonia, who is also acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Jüri Luik, containing a request for the admission of Estonia as a full member of the Conference. Copies of this communication were placed, in the usual manner, in delegations' pigeon-holes on Tuesday. This official communication brings the total number of States requesting admission as full members of the Conference to 22 and, in accordance with previous practice, will be reflected in the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the United Nations General Assembly.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

If not, I would like to propose that we suspend this meeting and reconvene tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

(The President)

The reason for this proposal is that the various consultations which I have conducted over the week suggest that the Conference is now almost in a position to appoint the three coordinators regarding whom a decision was taken last week. It is in fact my impression that in only a few hours we will be in a position to make these three appointments. Accordingly, if I hear no objection from the Conference, I would ask this favour of you and thank you once again for your flexibility and goodwill: I would request you to agree to suspend this meeting and to resume tomorrow at 9.30 a.m., with the sole purpose of taking a decision on the appointment of the three coordinators for the three procedural items, in accordance with the decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament last week.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. on Thursday, 21 June 2001, and resumed at 9.45 a.m. on Friday, 22 June 2001.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The 878th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

I would like to inform you that we have concluded the consultations to fill the posts of special coordinators provided for in decision CD/1646 adopted by the Conference at its 878th plenary meeting, on 14 June 2001. I can inform you that the Conference has agreed to appoint Ambassador Günther Seibert of Germany as Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference; Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria as Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Membership of the Conference and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka as Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference.

May I take it that the Conference agrees to these appointments?

It was so decided.

I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to Ambassador Seibert, Ambassador Draganov and Ambassador Kariyawasam on their appointment; I wish them every success in carrying out their important duties and urge them to commence their work as soon as possible. In this context, I would like to draw members' attention to the last sentence of decision CD/1646, in which the Conference requests the special coordinators to "report to it before the conclusion of the 2001 session".

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Turkey.

Mr. SUNGAR (Turkey): Mr. President, the reason I have taken the floor today is to express, on behalf of the Western Group, our gratitude for the contribution you have made to moving the Conference on Disarmament ahead. Your diligence and untiring efforts in this regard are highly appreciated.

We believe that the Western Group, for its part, demonstrated a certain measure of flexibility in obtaining the positive results which, we hope, will be beneficial to the effective functioning of the Conference. As always, flexibility, in our judgement, played a key role in the

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

achievement of this rather modest goal. We therefore hope that, in the future, under similar circumstances, all groups will be able to approach matters in a less rigid manner. In this context, I wish to underline the fact that none of the issues with which we deal or intend to deal within the Conference on Disarmament can be regarded as the permanent responsibility of any one geographical group.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): If no other delegation wishes to speak I would like briefly to thank all of you here in the Conference for your trust and spirit of solidarity which has enabled us to make this modest but important step forward. I may assure you that this is a very timely decision and one that is highly relevant. I would also like to express my thanks to the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Petrovsky, to thank Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, who is currently not in Geneva, for his collaboration and to thank Mr. Jerzy Zaleski. I would also like to thank the entire secretariat team and, of course, the interpreters and other staff members whose work has helped us perform our own tasks; finally, I would like to thank the staff of my own mission and Mr. Camilo Ruiz, my Minister Counsellor for Disarmament Affairs.

It only remains for me to wish the Ambassador of Cuba, Mr. Carlos Amat Forés, every success in the exercise of his duties and to assure him that the Colombian delegation will give every support in ensuring the success of his work.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 28 June 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 9.50 a.m.